

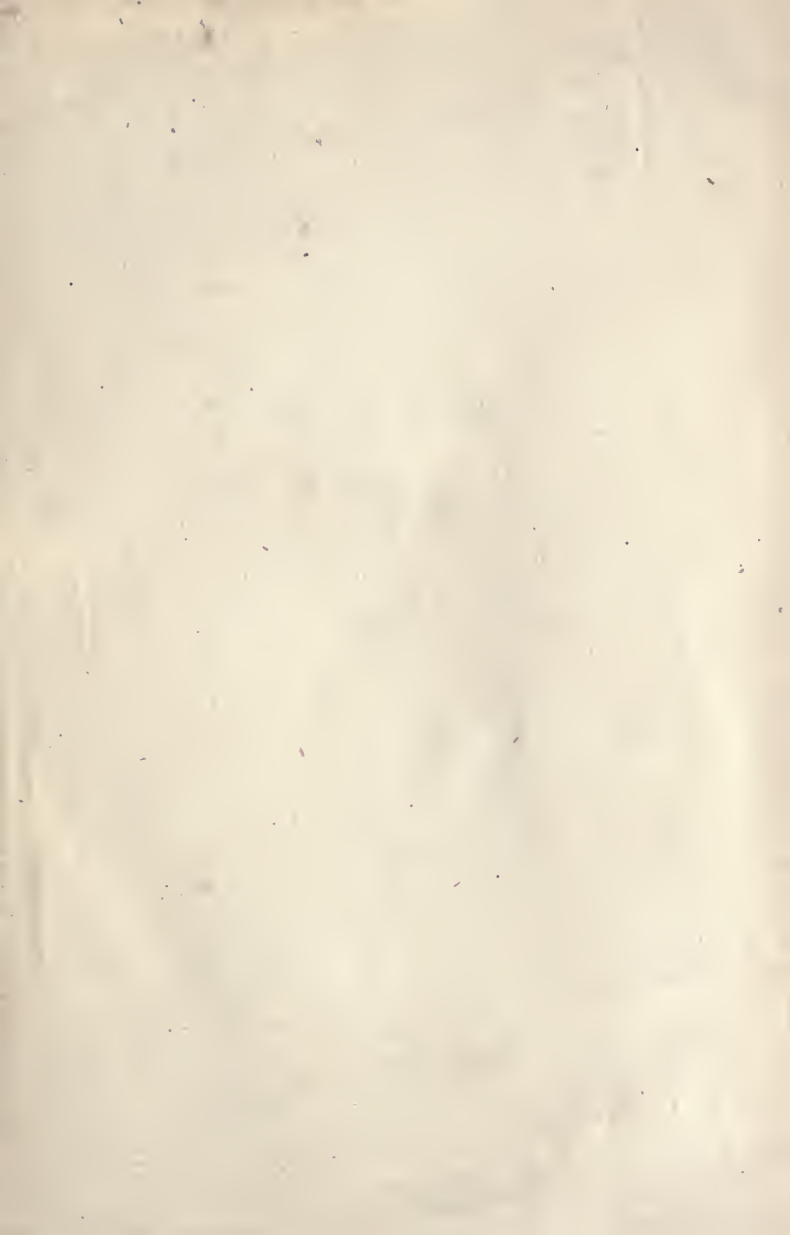
PS
3157
W37
B4
1869

A
A
0
0
0
2
7
9
6
1
1
8



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

WATSON'S
BEAUTIFUL SNOW
AND OTHER
POEMS



PS

3157

W3.7

B4

1869



BEAUTIFUL SNOW,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

J. W. WATSON



PHILADELPHIA:
TURNER BROTHERS & CO.,

No. 808 CHESTNUT STREET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1869, by

TURNER BROTHERS & CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Eastern
District of Pennsylvania.



TO MY MOTHER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
BEAUTIFUL SNOW.....	7
THE SUNLIGHT IN HER HAIR.....	12
NO LETTER.....	16
A MILLION, ALL IN GOLD.....	20
DEATH'S CARRIAGE STOPS THE WAY.....	25
MY PIPE.....	30
THE DYING SOLDIER.....	36
THE SAILING OF THE YACHTS.....	42
"RING DOWN THE DROP—I CANNOT PLAY.".....	46
THE OLDEST PAUPER ON THE TOWN.....	50
DROWNED.....	55
THE SKATERS.....	61
GIVE ME DRINK.....	68
"IT WILL ALL BE RIGHT IN THE MORNING.".....	72
GOD BLESS YOUR BEAUTIFUL HAND.....	75
FARMER BROWN.....	78
THE PATTEN OF LITTLE FEET.....	83
OLD NEWS.....	87
MISSING: PRIVATE WILLIAM SMITH.....	94
I WISH THAT I COULD RUN AWAY.....	97

BEAUTIFUL SNOW.

OH! the snow, the beautiful snow,
Filling the sky and the earth below;
Over the house-tops, over the street,
Over the heads of the people you meet;
Dancing,
Flirting,
Skimming along.

Beautiful snow! it can do nothing wrong.
Flying to kiss a fair lady's cheek;
Clinging to lips in a frolicsome freak.
Beautiful snow, from the heavens above,
Pure as an angel and fickle as love!

Oh! the snow, the beautiful snow!
How the flakes gather and laugh as they go!

Whirling about in its maddening fun,
It plays in its glee with every one.

Chasing,

Laughing,

Hurrying by,

It lights up the face and it sparkles the
eye;

And even the dogs, with a bark and a bound,
Snap at the crystals that eddy around.

The town is alive, and its heart in a glow
To welcome the coming of beautiful snow.

How the wild crowd goes swaying along,
Hailing each other with humor and song!
How the gay sledges like meteors flash by—
Bright for a moment, then lost to the eye.

Ringling,

Swinging,

Dashing they go

Over the crest of the beautiful snow:

Snow so pure when it falls from the sky,
To be trampled in mud by the crowd rushing
by ;

To be trampled and tracked by the thousands of
feet

Till it blends with the horrible filth in the street.

Once I was pure as the snow—but I fell :
Fell, like the snow-flakes, from heaven—to
hell :

Fell, to be tramped as the filth of the street :

Fell, to be scoffed, to be spit on and beat.

Pleading,

Cursing,

Dreading to die,

Selling my soul to whoever would buy,
Dealing in shame for a morsel of bread,
Hating the living and fearing the dead.

Merciful God ! have I fallen so low ?

And yet I was once like this beautiful snow !

Once I was fair as the beautiful snow,
With an eye like its crystals, a heart like its glow;
Once I was loved for my innocent grace—
Flattered and sought for the charm of my face.

Father,

Mother,

Sisters all,

God, and myself, I have lost by my fall.
The veriest wretch that goes shivering by
Will take a wide sweep, lest I wander too nigh;
For of all that is on or about me, I know
There is nothing that's pure but the beautiful
snow.

How strange it should be that this beautiful snow
Should fall on a sinner with nowhere to go!
How strange it would be, when the night comes
again,
If the snow and the ice struck my desperate
brain!

Fainting,

Freezing,

Dying alone

Too wicked for prayer, too weak for my moan

To be heard in the crash of the crazy town,

Gone mad in its joy at the snow's coming down;

To lie and to die in my terrible woe,

With a bed and a shroud of the beautiful snow!

THE SUNLIGHT IN HER HAIR.

THERE'S an old stone house, on a lonely
street—

A house of a sombre hue—

And day by day, for forty years,

I've passed within its view;

A house of a dead and mouldy state—

The cast-off shell of the rich and great—

It frowns on the street, through its dingy paint,

In a consequential way;

Seeming to shrink from the summer air

And the yellow sunlight's play.

But I watch alone the one bright spot

On those dingy, sombre walls,

Where a woman sits at her daily toil,

And the yellow sunlight falls.

I have watched that window for forty years,
Through the breaking of smiles and the falling
of tears ;

I have watched the jewel my heart has en-
shrined,

And my daily prayers bless ;

I have mingled her name with my nightly
dreams—

Fair Josephine Van Ness.

And never, in all these long, long years,

Have I spoken to Josephine,

But I watch the sunlight play in her hair

And the shadows pass between ;

And I muse on the change that time will bring

To every fair and beautiful thing ;

For when first the sunlight fell on her hair

It played with each golden braid ;

But the gold has gone, and the gathered locks

Are with lines of silver laid.

I never have spoken to Josephine,
Though I've loved her long and well;
But the dreams I have dreamed of the coming
time

Are more than my heart can tell.
I have promised myself from day to day,
Till my step has grown old and my hair has
grown gray,

That when fortune shall favor my efforts to
rise,

Dear Josephine shall share,
And the dim old house shall be bright again
With the sunlight in her hair.

She may have grown old to other eyes—

To mine she is ever the same,

Like a glorious picture mellowed by time,

And set in an oaken frame.

For many and many a toilsome year

I lingered in passion, or shivered in fear,

Lest some who were greater or richer than I
Should mark the yellow sheen
Of the sunlight dancing in her hair,
And woo my Josephine.

But the years have passed us, one by one.

And never a wooer there came;

They may have slighted the toiling girl,

But I love her just the same.

And every day I will pass the street,

Though she hears not the sound of my lingering
feet;

And every day, through the winter's snow,

And summer's waving green,

I will look at the window, and wait for the time

I can speak to Josephine.

NO LETTER.

O H HOPE! thou stolid tenant of
Each wayworn wanderer's worldly breast,
Can no alarms before thy gate
Erect once more thy warrior crest?
Hath love and fortune, long deferred,
So palsied all thy limbs of steel
That life hath nothing in its creed
To rouse thee up for woe or weal?

With listless feet and vacant air,
On distant shores I mark my round,
And scan with careless eye the crowds
I meet on unfamiliar ground.
Not gaining by my worldly lore,
Not profiting by stranger hands,

My heart goes back through weary miles
To clasp the love of other lands.

One daily pilgrimage I tread,
The Mecca of my stolid hope,
One path in utter darkness veiled,
With hands outstretched, I daily grope.
Before a portal, prison barred,
My shibboleth I daily sum,
And watch a youth hold countless worlds
Between a finger and a thumb.

I watch with eager eyes his face,
On which unmeaning silence broods,
Bent o'er the eloquence of man
In all his wondrous human moods.
I chafe when, like some mere machine,
On Beauty's missive falls his touch,
And wonder why electric force
Should not unloose the vampyre clutch.

Life, love and death, beneath his hand,

Run glib and facile to and fro ;

Stark, staring ruin, sudden wealth,

Like flashing meteors come and go.

The fierce defiance, greed of gold,

The cry for mercy—softly cried—

And one faint, wandering line from him

Who on the field of battle died.

My turn! In one brief second's thought

I span the arc of changing years ;

My heart goes out through boundless space,

With choking, throbbing hopes and fears.

I think of one who, months before,

Hung sobbing on my burning breast,

Whose words still linger on my ear :

“My own ; my heart's beloved, my best !”

I think of how, through weary days,

I've stood, as now, before the gate,

And watched the human form within,

Machine-like, serve the crowds that wait: . . .

I think how, at the whispered name,

His hand went deftly to the spot

Where life and death, and love and hate

In waiting lay—but mine was not.

All this! but as the lightning's flash

Before my eyes a missive lay;

A stranger hand—the seal unknown—

What can this fearsome letter say?

God, give me but a moment's strength!

Keep still, my heart—the seals are torn,

One line alone, the rest is dark—

“She died at one o'clock this morn!”

A MILLION, ALL IN GOLD!

THE gallant ship went down at sea,
Went down in the shrieking wind—
Went down with a hundred souls on board,
And left no trace behind.
She was dashing—dashing grandly on
Where the storm-swept waters rolled;
Her freight was a hundred beating hearts,
And a million—all in gold!

The night was dark as a soul condemned,
And the scream of the gale, despair.
The shivering crowds that clung to the shrouds
Were raising their voices in prayer.
She rolled in the dreadful trough of the sea,
And their grip was a desperate hold,

As the ship went down with a trembling moan,
And a million—all in gold!

The darkness closed on their one wild dirge,
And the lightning gave one glare
On the spot where a group of ghost-like eyes
Were fixed in a deathly stare!

But the morrow's sun shall kiss the place
Where lie in the waters cold,
A hundred corses, stark and stiff,
And a million—all in gold.

A thousand weary miles away
Is a man with silvery hair,
Who bends o'er the desk in his counting-room,
With a pale and frightened air.
He grasps the sheet that brought the news
In a strong, convulsive hold,
And groans, "O God, the ship is lost,
With a million—all in gold!"

Where flash the jewels in the light,
And the music's master-tone,
With its rich, voluptuous, softening phrase,
Makes heart and soul its own,
A woman sits, superbly fair,
And hears the story told;
She heaves a sigh for the glorious ship,
And the million—all in gold!

A mother gropes at her daily toil
Till her fingers cramp with pain,
But she knows that her days of care will cease
When her boy shall come again;
But now her task will never be done
Till she lies in the churchyard mould;
Her heart went down with the gallant ship,
And the million—all in gold!

The mariner's wife has kissed her babe
And hushed it with a song—

A song of hope and the coming time

She has taught her heart so long.

She never will sing that song again,

For the sailor stout and bold

Went down in the sea, with the foundered ship,

And the million—all in gold!

And twice ten thousand careless eyes

Shall read of the missing sail,

And twice ten thousand careless ears

Shall listen to the tale.

And all that careless, listening crowd,

The young, the gay, the old,

Shall speak of the fate of the gallant ship,

And the million—all in gold!

There are other eyes and other ears

Than that careless, listening crowd—

Eyes that are weeping endless tears,

And hearts that cry aloud!

Hearts that shall cry for evermore,
While the bells of life are tolled,
For the glorious ship that went to sea,
With a million—all in gold!

DEATH'S CARRIAGE STOPS THE
WAY.

MY Lady Clara, rich in grace,
And rich in all the charm of face,

Has marked her course upon life's way
With bold, imperious, haughty sway.

She walks embodied Fashion's queen,
The bowing ranks of life between.

She scorns the earth, rebukes the sky
With spurning tread and glancing eye.

And thus my lady goes her way,
Still stern and cold with every day.

My lady, lapped in luscious ease,
With all appliances to please,

Drove through the crowd that stood amaze
Behind her team of dappled grays;

Not thankful for the summer air,
But angered at the vulgar stare.

She sat in state to beauty blind,
And stately footmen clung behind,

While prudent hands her horses guide;
All this to feed my lady's pride.

But something checks my lady's course;
Amid the crush of man and horse,

Her carriage stands for moments still,
Against her fierce commanding will.

“Go on!” she cried with kindling face;

Who dares to stop my lady’s pace?

“Go on!” she cried, yet pranced each gray,

Without proceeding on its way.

“Go on!” once more she cries in wrath;

“What minion dares to stop my path?”

Then hears her placid coachman say,

“Death’s carriage, lady, stops the way.”

Why grows my lady sudden pale?

Why do her stern commandings fail?

Among the guests who pass her door,

Has she ne’er heard that name before?

Nay! yes, full well she knows the name

Of him who once in welcome came,

Passed in her loveless, wedded door,
And loosed the fetters that she wore.

But now the mention made her start,
And checked the life-blood in her heart.

Death's carriage stops my lady's way,
While smiled the gorgeous summer day!

Her carriage moves, the moments fly,
And man and horse rush swiftly by,

But still my lady's stately pace
Keeps time with all her stately grace,

Until before her portal stays
Her stately team of prancing grays,

And stately footmen, from their height,
Descend to see my lady light.

Why comes she not? With wondering stare,
In silence, gaze the lackeys where

The open door invites approach
To help my lady from her coach.

At length, one bolder than the rest,
Stooped low, for once, his stately crest,

And peering to the cushioned deeps,
He whispered soft, "My lady sleeps!"

She sleeps, ay, sleeps the sleep of death;
His touch has chilled her stately breath;

His, the one power that dared to stay
My lady's carriage on its way.

MY PIPE.

WHAT! sell my pipe, sir? By old Jove!

Ha! ha! excuse my ill-seemed mirth.

Why, boy, to get that pipe I clove

A trooper to his saddle-girth!

What's that? Why, more than you have done,

My white-faced lad, or you will do,

If you but end as you've begun:

Mind what I tell you, lad, 'tis true!

Put up your money; this old pipe

May be, as you have said, a gem:

Whoever loosens death's last gripe

Will find it here, a prize to them.

A beauty! yes indeed, a pearl!

See how the rich brown color glows;

The blushes of a pretty girl,

The heart's core of the deep red rose!

Pshaw! sell my pipe! the thing's absurd!

My silver-lipped, my amber-tipped!

See here, my lad, perhaps you've heard

About a pack of fellows whipped

At Gettysburg? Well, I was there,

Where showers of ball ploughed up the ground
Beneath the footsteps of my mare,

Who challenged death at every bound!

Up came an order from our chief

To take a belching battery nigh:

Our captain's words were sharp and brief,

“Forward! which of ye fears to die?”

Like one united mass we sprang

O'er abattis: the works were won;

With one wild shout the hillside rang,

And then we spiked each murderous gun!

Just then a cloud of horsemen rushed
Upon our rear like some fierce gust:
By very count they should have crushed
Our little band into the dust.
Full five to one the squadron came;
Thank God! we knew not how to fly,
For, I'll be sworn, each felt the same,
As men who did not fear to die.

Wild was the crash; the shrieks, the yells,
The screaming of the frightened steeds!
It seemed as though a score of hells
Had loosed their fiends for bloody deeds!
Each man of all our little band
Fought like a hundred men in one,
Slashing his foes on either hand,
As though 'twere but a bit of fun.

At last, with half our comrades slain,
We beat the foemen wildly back,

And fiercely over hill and plain

We smote them on their flying track.

My arm was hardened steel that day

From shoulder to my sword's red tip;

But still, no blood was in the fray

Of mine, save from my bitten lip.

But I had seen my brother fall—

Hewed down by one great, giant blow:

The sight had turned my blood to gall,

And almost checked its living flow.

I bent my mare's long reaching stride

On every flying wretch I scanned,

Sworn that no spot on earth should hide

The murderer from my vengeful hand.

The night was closing in around,

With just enough of light to see,

When suddenly I heard the sound

Of clattering hoofs not far from me.

I turned my mare, and stood on guard,

My ready sabre on my knee;

My listening heart beat quick and hard,

For something whispered, "This is he!"

I knew him at our horses' length,

Though but a glimpse I had before—

His fierce, black eye, his size and strength,

His hands all smeared with blackened gore;

And in his tightly clenched teeth

He held this pipe with mocking grin—

A grin that hid a fiend beneath;

A murderous fiend there lurked within.

He stretched his head, with straining eyes,

Thinking my silent form a friend:

I marked him for a certain prize,

And grasped my sabre for the end.

Just then he thrust his cursed face

Far forward from his saddle-bow,

And with a puff lit all the place,
And knew me for his deadly foe.

But ere his horse could backward spring,
I clutched this pipe with fiercest hate;
Then, with one quick and desperate swing,
My good sword fell—alas! too late!
He charged, and, in his fearful haste,
He only took my bridle-arm;
I cut him, cleanly, to his waist:—
An arm the less, boy, that's no harm!

So that's the way my pipe was won.
Now, do you think I'd sell my prize!
Why, all the gold beneath the sun
Would not so fill my loving eyes.
I kiss its bowl for memory's sake—
The memory of my brother Steve;
It's presence keeps the thought awake
Of him I slew that summer eve.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

STEADY, boys, steady! •

Keep your arms ready!

God only knows whom we may meet here.

Don't let me be taken:

I'd rather awaken

To-morrow in—no matter where—

Than lie in that foul prison-hold over there.

Step slowly!

Speak lowly!

These rocks may have life.

Lay me down in this hollow;

We are out of the strife.

By heavens! these fellows may track me in blood,

For this hole in my breast is outpouring a flood.

No! No surgeon for me, he can give me no
aid;

The surgeon I want is a pickaxe and spade.

What, Morris, a tear? why shame on you
man!

I thought you a hero; but since you've began
To whimper and cry, like a girl in her teens,
By George! I don't know what the devil it
means!

Well! well! I am rough; 'tis a very rough
school,

This life of a trooper, but yet I'm no fool!

I know a brave man, and a friend from a foe,
And, boys, that you love me I certainly know.

But wasn't it grand,

When they came down the hill, over sloughing
and sand?

But we stood—did we not?—like immovable rock,
Unheeding their balls and repelling their shock.

Did you mind the loud cry,

When, as turning to fly,

Our men sprang upon them, determined to die?

Oh! wasn't it grand!

God help the poor wretches that fell in that
fight;

No time was there given for prayer or for flight:
They fell by the score in the crash, hand to
hand,

And they mingled their blood with the sloughing
and sand.

Huzza!

Great heavens! this bullet-hole gapes like a
grave;

A curse on the aim of that villainous knave!

Is there never a one of you knows how to pray,
Or speak for a man as his life ebbs away?

Pray!

Pray!

Thy kingdom come, thy will—why don't you
proceed?

Can't you see I am dying? Great God, how I
bleed!

Ebbing away!

Ebbing away!

The light of the day

Is turning to gray.

Pray! pray!

And forgive us our trespasses—tell me the
rest

While I stanch the hot blood from this hole in
my breast.

Say something to smooth the rough road I am
bound;

I am galloping fast over dangerous ground.

Do you think the good Master above will—Pray!
pray!

Can't you see how my life-blood is ebbing
away?

Here, Morris, old fellow, get hold of my
hand;

And, Wilson, my comrade—Oh! wasn't it
grand

When they came down the hill, like a thunder-
charged cloud,

And were scattered like mist by our brave little
crowd?

Where's Wilson? My comrade, here, stoop down
your head,

Can't you say a short prayer for the dying—or
dead?

Christ, God, who died for sinners all,

Hear thou this suppliant wanderer's cry,

Let not e'en this poor sparrow fall,

Unheeded by thy gracious eye.

Throw wide the gates to let him in,

And take him pleading, to thine arms,

Forgive, O Lord, his lifelong sin,

And quiet all his fierce alarms.

God bless you, my comrade, for singing that
hymn ;

It is light to my path when my sight has grown
dim.

I am dying—bend down, till I touch you once
more—

Don't forget me, old fellow—God prosper this
war !

Confusion to foes, but—keep hold of my hand—

But pray that peace comes to a prosperous land !

THE SAILING OF THE YACHTS.

UP pennon—heave the deep-sea lead;

Our course lies to the sun:

God's grace to each stout mariner,

Until the strife be done.

Between us and the restless waves

An inch of plank stands guard;

White-bearded, and with threatening moans,

They follow swift and hard.

With three proud colors in the air—

The red, the white, the blue—

Three tiny vessels, trusting God,

Away to eastward flew.

Stout hearts looked forward on the path,

Nor dreamed mischance could be.

Such faith had each bold seaman in

These graces of the sea.

Through blinding snow and cutting wind,

In dreary winter-time,

They swept along the trackless deep

Like some fierce Norseman's rhyme.

They sped as speeds the wild sea-bird

When bursts the tempest wind ;

They sped as speeds the swift narwhale.

And leave the waves behind.

Sweeps down the icy northern blast

Along their watery course,

Yet never dreams the seaman bold

Of shipwreck or of loss.

His wishful eye is fondly bent

Toward an alien shore,

And watchful for each offering gale

To haste the journey o'er.

Speed on, ye tiny wingéd barks,
By Yankee seamen manned,
And bear glad news through waves and wind
To yon proud Eastern land.
Show them the blood from whence ye sprang
Has in your keeping throve,
And that a native of your land
Is one remove from Jove.

Show them that when your manhood wills,
No winds can stop the way;
That angry waves but speed you on,
By darkness or by day.
Show them that this same dauntless will
That bore you to their shore,
Within the land you left behind
Lives in a million more.

Show them that through our woeful pains
Still throbbed the nation's heart;

That sword and bayonet has not

Yet killed the nation's art.

Show them that through the deadly strife

That rent us to the core,

We still had men enough to wield

The hammer and the saw.

So be your mission one of joy

To all the human race;

And hands that welcome you shall be

The hands of courtly grace.

So shall your presence in the East

Untie some Gordian knots,

And make the song of songs to be

The "Sailing of the Yachts."

“RING DOWN THE DROP--I CAN-
NOT PLAY.”

OH! painted gauds and mimic scenes,
And pompous trick that nothing means!
Oh! glaring light and shouting crowd,
And love-words in derision vowed!
Oh! crownéd king with starving eyes,
And dying swain who never dies!
Oh! hollow show and empty heart,
Great ministers of tragic art!

“There’s that within which passeth show:”
The days they come, the days they go.
We live two lives, on either page—
The one upon the painted stage,

With all the world to hear and gaze,
And comment on each changing phase;
The other, that sad life within,
Where love may purify a sin.

Ring up the drop, the play is on;
Our hour of entrance comes anon.
Choke down the yearnings of the soul;
Weak, doting fool! art thou the whole?
The stage is waiting, take thy part;
Forget to-night thou hast a heart;
Let sunshine break the gathering cloud,
And smile thou on the waiting crowd.

Hear how their plaudits fill the scene:
Is not thy greedy ear full keen?
Is not a thousand shouts a balm
For all thy throbbing heart's alarm?
"To be or not to be"—the screed
Is listened to with breathless heed.

O painter with a painted mask!
Is thy brain wandering from thy task?

Can it be true that scores of years
Do not suffice to murder tears?
Can it be true that all of art
Has failed to teach the human heart?
Can gauds, and tricks, and shout, and glare,
The deafening drum, the trumpet's blare,
With all their wild, delirious din,
Not stifle this sad life within?

Pah, man! the eager people wait;
Go on with all thy studied prate.
Shall you not feed their longing eyes
Because—because a woman dies?
What cares the crowd for dying wives,
For broken hearts, or blasted lives!
They paid their money, and—they say—
Living or dead, on with the play.

What! staggering, man? why, where's your art?

That stare was good; that tragic start

Would make your fortune, were it not

That it rebukes the author's plot.

"My wife is dying!" He ne'er wrote

The words that struggle in thy throat.

"Take back your money," did you say?

"Ring down the drop—I cannot play."

Ring down the drop; the act is o'er;

Her bark has touched the golden shore,

While, reading from life's inner page,

Stands there the actor of the stage;

But not upon the cold, white corse

Falls there a word of sad remorse

From all that crowd who heard him say,

"Ring down the drop—I cannot play."

THE OLDEST PAUPER ON THE TOWN.

AND so old Betsey Green is dead!
The oldest pauper on the town;

She who has eaten public bread—

Bread of the most unchanging brown—

For six-and-thirty years.

Old Betsey Green is under sod,

Mixed in with loads of human clay;

No surpliced priest appealed to God,

And challenged in the light of day

A waiting crowd to tears.

They wrapped her lifeless, withered form

In the scant sheet whereon she lay;

And while her limbs were lithe and warm

They bore poor Betsey Green away,

Lest she recover breath.

They nailed the county coffin down,
With many jokes on her who died;
And one old pauper on the town,
And only one old pauper, cried—
From selfish fear of death.

A gravel-wagon bore the load,
Unwashed, unswept from mud and mire;
The driver jolting o'er the road,
Lest for the pittance of his hire
He gave it too much ride.

And then the three-foot pauper-grave—
Unwilling digged by pauper hands—
Where one—half idiot, half knave—
With whitened hair, in waiting stands
For Betsey Green who died.

He shovels in the frozen clods.
He chuckles as they rattle down,
And to himself he laughs and nods—
This oldest pauper on the town,
Since Betsey Green is dead.

“I can remember well,” he croaks,
“That she was fair as any queen;
And well to do were all the folks
Who were of kin with Betsey Green
The day that she was wed;

“For all the maids in miles about
Had set their caps at Robert Green—
The comeliest lad without a doubt,
The country-side had ever seen—
And she the greatest catch.

“And Betsey, she had babes as fair
As though she'd chosen gifts for each:
They had their mother's eyes and hair,
And Robert's wheedling treacherous speech:
The selfish, greedy wretch!

“He spent the gold her father gave;
He mortgaged all her broad farm-lands;
She toiled and watched, to earn and save:
He never soiled his dainty hands,
Or browned his handsome face.

“ ’Twas well for her, the neighbors said,
When, on one cold, December day,
They found him, in a snow-wreathed bed,
Upon the ice-bound public way,
Fast locked in Death’s embrace.

“ For Robert loved the liquor-can
Too well to save his face or life:
The bloated semblance of a man
Was all they brought the stricken wife
From where he late had lain.

“ Year after year, by day and night,
Her hands and head were never still.
Her girls were fair, her boys were bright—
Not one of all the six did ill,
In wedding or in gain.

“ Still, Betsey could not keep away
The spectre who will never wait;
And so one stern and bitter day,
She stood before the workhouse gate,
To beg for pauper fare.

“Time flies! time flies! and Betsey’s dead!

And then, next, comes my turn to die.

A hundred years were on her head—

Ten years the elder she than I—

How soon shall I be there!”

Again he stamped the frozen ground,

With feeble step and vacant stare;

Cast one long, idle look around,

And left old Betsey lying there,

To wait her God and crown.

Ah, well! poor Betsey’s pauper blood

Runs proudly through some purple veins;

No base suspicion taints its flood,

Of this, the worst of earthly stains—

A pauper on the town!

DROWNED!

WHERE the mud lies black and slimy,

Where the waters sweep along,

Where the wharfmen, stout and grimy,

Heave and haul with many a song—

Heaving still

With a will,

Every coming dray to fill,

Hauling, with a laugh and shout,

Bales of wondrous size about;

Straining to the ponderous weight

Of the good ship's wealthy freight.

Where the wide and swelling river

Rolls in one perpetual rhyme:

Where the gracious winds deliver

Glorious things from every clime—

Stuffs to wear,

Spices rare,

Lie in heaps, or scent the air;

Where the merchant, full of gold,

Welcomes home the seamen bold;

Where each heart, its love confessed,

Clasps the loved one to the breast;

Where the soft-voiced land-breeze ever

Hums its tune by mast and shroud,

Where the rough-tongued master never

Ceases crying to the crowd—

“With a haul,

Lubbers all,

Stretch your muscles to the fall!”

Where the never-ceasing flow,

Man above, and waves below,

Night and day pours on and off,
Mingling at the city wharf;—

There the vagrant boy is standing
With a ghastly, frightened air;
While each loungee is demanding
What he sees to make him stare.

Still his eyes

Grow in size

As his stammering speech he tries;
And his finger points below,
Where the waters ebb and flow:
Still his lips give forth no sound
But a hoarsely-whispered “Drowned!”

Where the planks are green and rotten,
Sending forth a sickening steam,
Where the daylight is forgotten,
And the wharf-rat reigns supreme—

In his eyes

Fierce surprise

At his toothsome human prize :

Squeaking, gibbering forth a cry,

As the crash above goes by ;

Heeding neither man nor horse

In his battles o'er the corse.

With a crowbar to the planking,

With the tackle and the fall,

With a heave, and with a clanking,

Shivering hands give willing haul.

There he lies !

Open eyes

Turned toward the sunlit skies ;

There he lies in oozing slime,

Heedless of the place and time ;

Heedless of the gazing throng,

Heedless of the clash and song.

Sunlight falls like shadows fading,

Still the song goes on aloud—

Still with gaze that seems upbraiding

Stares the dead man on the crowd.

Hours fly

Swiftly by ;

Sunset darkens on the sky,

Ere the lingering men and boys

Hear the dead-cart's rumbling noise

O'er the distant stone-clad ground,

Coming for the man that's "Drowned."

Had his limbs been clothed in scarlet,

Were his linen rich and rare,

Had he been the veriest varlet,

Tainting God's own perfumed air,

Would he lie,

While hours fly,

Staring sightless to the sky?

Would the crowd so careless stand
If a gem gleamed on his hand?
Would they sing and laugh around.
Were he better dressed when "Drowned?"

THE SKATERS.

I STOOD on the frozen river,
Watching the skaters go by;
They were laughing and shouting merrily
Under the cold gray sky;
Lazily swinging their way along,
Cheerfully singing some snatches of song,
Skimming like birds on the face of the waves,
Swimming like fish in their deep-sea caves.

I saw not an eye but sparkled,
Not a step but was careless and free;
They were laughing and shouting merrily,
And as happy as happy could be;
Carefully staying the speed in their pace,
Warily weighing the chance in a race,

Winging their way through the change in the
throng,

Singing the score of the SKATER'S SONG.

Over the ice, like the swallows, I fly,
With light in my heart and light in my eye;
The swiftest of runners their tardiness feel
When my feet are encased in the glistening
steel.

Away I dash,

Like the lightning's flash,

Or the racer under the rider's lash.

Eyes that look out from the loveliest face
Laugh at my follies or smile at my grace;
The life of my blood courses up to the brain,
And the days of my boyhood come to me again.

I look not back,

Though the ice may crack,

For a hundred come like wolves on my track.

Up to the north, in the face of the gale,
Breathless we turn, spreading out for the sail;
A fleet of gay steamers rush down on the wind,
Leaving Time and the sluggards completely behind;

For life but waits,
At Pleasure's gold gates,
For the hours we spend on the glorious skates.

I stood on the frozen river,
Watching the skaters go by;
They were laughing and shouting merrily,
Under the cold gray sky;
Joyfully greeting the calls of a friend,
Heartily meeting the jibes they may send,
Kissing the lips of the loved ones that stay,
Missing the lips of the loved ones away.

There was one in the midst of the skaters,
A beautiful boy of ten,

With a dreamy, dark-eyed beauty,
Who flitted among the men;
Laughingly winning his way along,
Scarcely beginning to feel himself strong,
Stumbling and catching his step from a fall,
Tumbling and rolling about like a ball.

There was one in the crowd of watchers
Who watched the boy in his play,
Whose eye was ever upon him
Whenever he wandered away;
Smilingly gazing at each new start,
Silently praising the child in her heart,
Willing to follow the steps of her boy,
Filling her soul with his frolicsome joy.

I stood in the midst of the skaters,
And looked at it all as a dream;
But my heart was suddenly awakened
With a single death-like scream;

Fearfully filling the chill winter air,
Instantly stilling the song that was there,
Crushing the light from a thousand of eyes,
Hushing in terror a thousand of sighs.

Where is the dark-eyed boy?
And the ever-watching mother?
A shrieking woman clings to her waist,
And her hands are held by another;
Terribly standing, in accents wild,
Idly demanding her beautiful child,
Staring with eyes in a fire-like glow,
Tearing the lace from her bosom of snow.

There is running to and fro,
And the talking of many men;
But an hour goes by before they find
The beautiful boy of ten;
Quietly raising him under their breath,
Earnestly praising his beauty in death,

Putting his limbs in a natural way,
Shutting his eyes from the light of the day.

But, the mother has broken her guard,
And lies on the breast of her child;
She is kissing the pallid, oozing lips
That the waters have defiled;
Gloomily pressing the baby-like corse,
Fondly caressing, and mourning her loss,
Trying to waken the voice of the dead,
Crying to God for the soul that is fled.

She has raised the babe in her arms,
Rejecting all offer of aid;
His arm falls over her shoulder,
And his head on her bosom is laid;
Wearily bearing her burden of death,
Tenderly caring as though he had breath,
Creeping along with a staggering pace,
Weeping, and kissing the little pale face.

I stand on the frozen river,
But the skaters no longer go by;
They are gathered in groups at the landings,
Under the cold gray sky;
Woefully talking of what they had seen,
Steadily walking where late they had been,
Running with terror at every sound,
Shunning the spot where the boy was drowned.

GIVE ME DRINK.

THERE'S my money; give me drink!

Fire to feed my hungry blood,
Drown my slightest wish to think:

Give me drink!

Drench me in the burning flood,
Until life and soul are numb,
Until every pulse is dumb,

Give me drink!

There's my clothing, there's my food;
Strip my limbs and leave them bare,
What care I how people stare?

Give me drink!

They know not the fearful thirst
Of what they call the cup accursed—
The cup in which my brain's immersed;

Give me drink!

There's my children, give me drink !

Make me drunken in my heart ;

I would sever every link,

Ere my cup and I should part :

Give me drink !

There is no nepenthe here,

Unhallowed by a woman's tear,

Unflavored with a wise man's sneer ;

Their notice makes the draught more dear.

Give me drink !

There's my health and peace of mind,

.I will give it all to thee,

I will throw my life behind,

.I will crouch upon my knee :

Give me drink !

There's my wife—my wedded wife !—

Once I loved her as my life :

What is wife and life to me ?

Give me drink !

Here's my standing as a man :

Give me drink !

Here's my Christian love and hope :

Give me drink !

Can I bear the social ban?

I can do what others can :

I can crawl, and steal, and kill,

So the draught be at my will—

Give me drink !

Here's my faith in all mankind :

Give me drink !

I scatter it upon the wind—

Give me drink !

And here—oh, here's my faith in God ;

I will not bend and kiss the rod,

I'll trample Heaven iron-shod :

Give me drink !

Make me drunken in my brain,

I will give thee wealth and fame ;

Make me drunken in my heart,

I will give thee spotless name :

Give me drink !

Make me drunken night and day ;

I will give my soul away,

God, and peace, and child, and wife,

Love, and faith, and hope, and life !

Give me drink !

“IT WILL ALL BE RIGHT IN
THE MORNING.”

I STOOD by the couch of my darling,
And watched the light in her eyes;
I held her fevered fingers,
And echoed her softest sighs.
But the time wore wearily onward,
Till it marked the sunset hour,
And the light went out from my darling's eyes,
As the bloom goes out from the flower.

Ah! then with a sickening tremor,
I watched for the soothing balm
That should come at the hands of the healer,
And shield my love from harm.
It came at the hour of sunset;
A grave and an aged man,

Who held the gift of a healing hand,

As far as a mortal can.

He counted her pulses that fluttered

Like wild imprisoned birds;

And then, with a glance to heaven,

He spake these cheering words:

"It will all be right in the morning."

Oh! skill of a learned leech,

Those words, to my worldly hearing,

What a world of hope they reach!

"It will all be right in the morning!"

I murmured them through the night,

As I watched her heavily breathing,

And longed for the coming light.

It came with its golden sunshine,

And I turned to my darling's bed,

To kiss her lips as a welcome,

But I found my loved one dead.

Dead! Dead with the morning's coming,

Dead! Dead with the words on my ear,

"It will all be right in the morning!"

And now but her form is here.

O heart, in thy wild resistance

At the stern decree of the Lord,

Rebelling to part with an atom

From out of thine earthly hoard!

"It will all be right in the morning!"

It was truth the wise leech spoke,

And in the heavenly sunshine

My darling one awoke—

Awoke from a dream of sorrow,

To dwell in the far-off lands,

Where, if all be right in the morning,

Once more I shall clasp her hands.

GOD BLESS YOUR BEAUTIFUL
HAND!

THE hand of my lady is soft and white;
For the sculptor's skill a test;
The eyes of my lady are deep and bright,
And her lips with kindness blest.

She moves with the grace of a crownéd queen,
Who walks in a loving land,
But of all her charms the world has seen,
There is none like her beautiful hand.

And I marveled much, for many a day,
How the world so blind could be,
That it cast all her other charms away,
And only the hand could see;

Until, as I sought a lonely street,
One bitter December eve,
I heard the fall of my lady's feet,
And a sad voice moan and grieve.

And then I saw her muffled form
Draw nigh to a sightless elf,
And about it wrap, both close and warm,
The shawl she had worn herself.

Then bending her head with a nameless grace
To the beggar's outstretched palms,
She silently gazed in the hungered face,
And gave it a queenly alms.

The old child caught at the fingers white,
As though for a fierce demand,
And said, "Oh, what would I give for my sight!
God bless your beautiful hand!"

Since then I marvel no more if the thought
Should go through the length of the land,
And all that is proud of the earth shall have
sought
The charm of my lady's hand.

FARMER BROWN.

OLD Farmer Brown, with ruddy face,
Sat stretched before the chimney-place;
He sat and watched the crackling logs,
The purring cat, the dreaming dogs,
That, like himself, were stretched at ease,
Safe sheltered from the chill night-breeze,
And with the freedom comfort brings,
The farmer thought these selfish things:

“Let foolish people grieve and sigh
At care that does not come anigh;
I’m not so weak to wail at what,
However bad, concerns me not.
My barns are full with golden grain,
My limbs are stout and free from pain,

And out, as far as eye can see,
The well-kept fields belong to me.

“My appetite is always sound
Whene’er the dinner-hour comes round;
And faith, betwixt the wife and me
There’s not much difference, as I see.
She’s hearty, merry, stout and fair,
No touch of silver in her hair;
She grows, as years pass swift away,
Much better-looking every day.

“I read of cities lost and won,
Of deeds of bloody valor done,
Of fearful battles, fought in vain,
With scores of thousands for the slain;
Of ravaged homes, insulted wives,
And children fleeing for their lives.
But why should I repine at these
When they do not disturb mine ease?

“The blood shed in these fearful fights
Does not disturb my sleep of nights;
The thousands that they choose to slay
Take not my appetite away.
This mug of cider by my side
Does not across my palate glide
Less smoothly when the clash of war
Comes faint and harmless to my door.

“Then why should I repine, who ne’er
Am troubled with a single care?
Stop—let me think! Ah, yes, with one—
My wandering Will, my truant son—
He whom we loved, our darling child,
So handsome, kind, and yet so wild!
A word, regretted ere its birth,
Sent Will a wanderer o’er the earth.

“If Will were but at home again,
The world might war for me in vain.

A knock ! Who's that ? Come in ? Ah, Jones !"

The farmer cried, in cheery tones.

"Walk in ! Sit down ! Here, wife, a light !

What brought you out this stormy night ?

Why, man, your face is stretched as long

As any tramping beggar's song."

"Ah, Neighbor Brown, it grieves me sore

To enter thus your welcome door.

The news I bear is very sad :

Your son——" "Good Lord, what of the lad?"

"Your son was killed at Shiloh fight ;

He died while battling for the right.

So, Neighbor Brown, bow to God's will ;

He knows best when to save or kill."

Poor Farmer Brown, with starting eyes,

Stood now erect. With mournful cries,

"O Lord !" he said, "what have I done,

That thou shouldst take my only son?"

And then a something whispered loud,
“Thou selfish man, whom God endowed,
Take to thy heart this lifelong blow,
And learn to share thy fellow’s woe!”

THE PATTER OF LITTLE FEET.

OVER my head, in the morning early,

I heard the patter of little feet,

Rising above the hurly-burly

Out in the fast-awakening street.

I like my nap in the morning early—

That drowsy, sleeping, waking time—

And am apt to give way to a touch of the surly

With one who breaks on its soothing rhyme,

And so this morn, when I heard the clatter,

I turned uneasily in my bed,

And bothered my brain to guess the matter

With the little ones pattering over my head.

My nap was gone, and in humor sulky

I stretched a loud and imperious yawn.

And then, with a word both big and bulky,
I blessed the hour those babes were born.

With a knitted brow and a hasty toilet,
I made up my mind as I mounted the stairs,
Whatever the fun, I would quickly spoil it
By coming upon them unawares.
I never had seen my top-floor neighbors;
This only I knew, that the tidy house,
Save and except for these infantine labors,
Was silent and still as a baby-mouse.

I knocked at the door, and a moment waited;
The noise was hushed to a whispered word;
The patter of little feet abated,
And a tiny hand on the knob I heard.
The door, with a labored opening, started,
And full in its light a vision appeared,
That carried my heart to the days departed,
And the one to whom it was ever endeared.

Oh, vision of life in the darkened palace

Where I have enshrined the one of my love!

What vestige remained of the wrath and malice

I threatened to wreak on the noise above?

What memoried thought is the one I am meeting?

What hands are they stretched as I entered
the door?

“Are you my papa?” was the baby-like greeting;

“Are you my papa, come home from the
war?”

“No, darling,” I said, with a choking emotion,

“I am not your papa, come home from the
war;

I am only a waif on the fathomless ocean,

With no one to love me the weary world
o’er.”

“With no one to love you?” the baby replies;

“I will love you myself—you shall be my
papa.”

And I caught the sweet child with the wondering
eyes

Up close to my breast where the memories are.

Oh, where was my heart as I lay in bed dozing,
And the noise overhead could not quicken its
beat?

The chambers of memory surely were closing
When no entrance was found for those dear
little feet;

For had I the riches we read of in story,
I would give up the whole to sweep away
years—

To bring back the pleasure, the wealth and the
glory,

The patter of dear little feet to my ears.

OLD NEWS.

O H! grandfather, grandfather, listen to me!

The most wonderful news has come over
the sea—

The most glorious news of the battles afar,
Where a million of men have been armed for
the war.

From the field of Magenta the Austrians fled,
And a score of their thousands were left with
the dead.

O'er the slopes of Palestro the conquerors bore
The eagles of France through a torrent of
gore;

And the Austrian legions were swept in the
gale,

As the husk is struck off by a blow of the flail.

Oh! grandfather, grandfather, read the great
news;

It will tell you the chances for glory you lose;
It will tell of the joy for the victories won,
And the shouts of the nations for deeds that were
done.

Dear grandfather, why don't you hurry away,
With your bright-bladed sword, to the midst of the
fray?—

That bright-bladed sword which you said, in my
hand,

Should some day strike blows for my own native
land?

Oh! grandfather, what a great thing it would be
Could we both but have been in those fights over
sea!

There were flashes of light in the grandfather's
eyes,

And a chuckle that mingled itself with his sighs,

As he shook his white head, with a half-smothered
groan,

And knocked out his pipe on the brown lintel-
stone.

Ah! boy, it is one thing to strike for our
lives,

For the land that we live in, our children and
wives,

And another to battle with halts in sight,
Unknowing the quarrels that drive us to fight.
To cut and to slash at a despot's command
Is not fighting, my boy, for your own native
land.

The echo that comes from the boom of the
gun

Is lost in the shouts when the battle is done;
But the groans of the wounded and shrieks of
the slain

Will be heard in the echoes again and again;

They will sound in the hearts, and be answered
with tears,

When the field where they fell is grown over
with years.

The news of a fight is like fresh-opened
wine—

You must quench all your thirst while its bubbles
still shine ;

You must drink while the perfume is fresh on
the breath,

For the dregs are a mixture of sorrow and
death.

I fought, my brave boy, when to skulk were a
shame

That could never be wiped from the line of a
name ;

I fought when refusal so blackened the youth
That his grandchild still blushes when told of the
truth :

When the white hair of age marched proudly
between

The iron-limbed man and the boy of fourteen;

When the crack of our rifles on Lexington plain

Was echoed, and echoed, and echoed again:

There were echoes, my boy, from the hills to
the sea,

In the hearts of a million who longed to be
free.

With us there was nothing of glitter and gold—

There was squalor and rags, and starvation and
cold;

There were barefooted men, who were tracked
by their blood

On the stone-jagged road or the icy-bridged flood;

There were men who had sworn by their foe-
ravaged lands,

By their blood-darkened hearths, with their swords
in their hands—

Who had sworn that their kindred should see
them no more

Till the land should be free from the curse that
it bore.

Those were times when the battle-field, gory and
red,

Bloomed with flowers perpetual over the dead.

The news of those battles will never grow old—
They grow by the telling, a thousand times told ;
But of fights that are fought for glory alone,
Ere the fighting is over the glory is flown.

It is dimmed on the crests of the conquering hosts
By the pale, bloody hands of a legion of ghosts ;
It is washed from the blades of victorious chiefs
By the heart-sweating tears of a million of
griefs.

Yes! even, my boy, from the head of a king
It is trampled and crushed like a valueless
thing.

When the battle is over, the scarlet and gold
Shall speedily rot in the blood-nurtured mould;
The steed and his rider shall stay where they fall,
And the stout idle worm shall be master of all;
The rains shall wash down all the proud clotted
gore,

And the winds bear away the last shreds of the
war.

Yet, unless they have stricken for freedom and
right,

The wails of the dying shall fade on the night;
But if God shall be with them, their hearts shall
be bold,

And the news of their battle shall never grow
old.

MISSING: PRIVATE WILLIAM
SMITH.

SERGEANT! enter on your roll,
“Missing—Private William Smith.”

Death is but a passing dream,
Life a false and shadowy myth.
Comrades, close your gaping ranks!
He was of the first platoon;
Missing Private William Smith
Doubtless will be heard of soon.

Missing Private William Smith
Led the charge that turned the day;
Through the thickest of the fight,
Step by step, he clove his way.
When I last saw Private Smith
He was grimed with smoke and gore,

What if Private William Smith

Should be heard of never more?

Comrades! soldiers should not mourn.

He was every inch a man!

Men have fallen in the fight

Ever since the world began.

Yet I would I knew for truth,

Now the fight is past and done—

Missing Private William Smith

Has a wife and little one.

Would I knew that clanking chains

Bound his iron muscles o'er!

Would I knew a prison wall

Held his limbs, though wounded sore!

Would that missing Private Smith

May be heard of once again!

Wounded, captive, so that he

Be not of the nameless slain.

Missing Private William Smith

Has a wife and little one ;

She was once a love of mine,

Ere my life had scarce begun.

I should hardly like to speak

To her of so strange a myth,

When the war is over, as

Missing Private William Smith.

I WISH THAT I COULD RUN AWAY.

DO you remember, chum of mine,
How forty years, or more, ago,
In days when we were wont to whine
O'er some tyrannic schoolmarm's blow?—
Do you remember one marked day,
When, smarting from the birchen pain,
We packed our traps to run away;
And run we did, with might and main?

Our wealth, in one newspaper rolled—
Two shirts, two handkerchiefs, a top,
Two pairs of socks, grown somewhat old,
And sundry ears of corn, to pop;
Two dozen marbles, several strings,
Slate-pencils, and a choice whip-lash,

Three buttons, and some minor things,
And nineteen cents in solid cash!

We wandered, that November day,
At least four miles away from home,
When, just as we began to say,
“How sweet it is to freely roam,
With every hedge a sheltering inn!”—
There came a cold and drenching rain
That wet us to the very skin;—
That night we slept at home again.

As time passed on, I thought and laughed
At that sad escapade of ours,
And yet the thought would always waft
A perfume, as of memoried flowers.
I find that with my growing years,
With hair well-streaked with certain gray,
And all that time and taste endears,
A strong desire to run away—

To run away and be at peace,
 With none to question, none to claim;
To shut away the world's caprice,
 Its turmoil, falsehood, and its shame;
To run away from struggling men,
 Who crush their brothers in the dust—
From ledger, cash-book, ink and pen,
 From cant, hypocrisy and lust.

To run from crowded cities, where
 The voice of man is never still;
To run from where the worm of care
 Is throned above Almighty will;
To run away to fields and flowers,
 And listen to the insect hum—
To lie forgetful of the hours,
 Forgetful of the time to come.

I sometimes think, good chum of mine,
 That day ill-chosen for our jaunt:

Should I again to run incline,
 'Twould not be in November gaunt,
But in the lusty summer-time,
 When birds and bees sing all the day,
When Nature seems a pleasant rhyme:
 That is the time to run away.

Believe me, that no sex or age
 Forgets that legend of its youth;
But, like a bird in gilded cage,
 Each pines for liberty and truth;
We writhe beneath some worldly pain,
 Refuse its mandates to obey;
Sigh for our childhood's days again,
 And wish that we could run away.



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 279 611 8

